

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 6, 2013

TO: MEMBERS OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

FROM: SANDRA MARKS, ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR, T&ES

SUBJECT: AGENDA ITEM #5 – DASH COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONS ANALYSIS (COA) UPDATE

ISSUE: Update on the DASH Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA).

RECOMMENDATION: That the Transportation Commission receive the report and provide input on DASH's role, needs, and priorities.

DISCUSSION: The City and Alexandria Transit Company (ATC) recently initiated an update to the DASH COA. ATC is a non-profit public service corporation, wholly-owned by the City of Alexandria. The last complete COA of the DASH bus system was conducted in 2005 with additional onboard data collected in 2008. Transportation Management and Design, Inc. (TMD) was hired to conduct the update to the COA, and initiated the project in October, 2012. The study will include an evaluation of all existing data and studies that have been completed, collect a complete set of new data based on current service, and develop short and long range recommendations to improve and expand service in the future. The long range recommendations shall take into consideration the future implementation of each of the City's Transitways. The goal of this project is to develop and prioritize short and long range solutions to improve the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the ATC fixed route transit system that would address the following issues:

1. Improve service frequency to meet urban transit standards
2. Improve travel times
3. Improve schedule adherence
4. Improve connectivity
5. Improve productivity
6. Identify latent demand
7. Identify underserved areas
8. Reduce overcrowding
9. Identify underutilized service
10. Incorporate and utilize future high capacity Transitways

An early project component is to conduct stakeholder outreach as well as collect information from riders and non-riders.

The consultant team is conducting interviews with key stakeholders to give an overview of the project, and get feedback on DASH's role within the community and region, the service and network priorities, and determine what has improved recently, and what needs improvement. The stakeholders include the City Council, members of various City commissions such as the Environmental Policy Commission, Transportation Commission, Commission on Persons with Disabilities, ATC staff and drivers, Alexandria Community Public Schools (ACPS), business representatives, Inova Hospital and City staff.

In addition to the stakeholder input, TMD will be conducting on-board rider surveys and a telephone survey in Spring, 2013. The rider survey will be used to obtain demographic characteristics, origin and destination information, other key travel behavior data and satisfaction of current riders. The telephone survey will be used to collect statistically valid information from DASH users and non-users in order to aid the future growth of DASH. Three public meetings will be held thru the course of the project to allow for public input on existing service and the proposed recommendations.

In addition to the stakeholder, rider and non-rider input, the consultant team will collect and review existing data (such as ridership, fleet size etc.), conduct a system-wide ridership count, and conduct a service evaluation based on the data. A market analysis will be conducted to determine the transit demand for the region based on market segmentation, travel patterns and transit competitiveness. Recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of existing programs and services will be made, with short and long term timeframes. These may include proposed route alignments, service frequencies and spans, and vehicle requirements. The project is anticipated to be complete by early 2014.